MIT's Oldest and
Largest Newspaper

thetech.com

The Tech
Established 1881

WEATHER, p. 2
THU: 75°F | 58°F Breezy.
FRI: 67°F | 50°F Chance Showers.
SAT: 55°F | 43°F Morning Rain.

Volume 140, Number 35

Thursday, October 15, 2020

MIT deliberating on delayed start to Spring 2021 semester

Week-long spring break removed in all five alternative calendar options to the current published calendar

By Grace Song
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The spring semester may be delayed by about two weeks and spring break may be canceled, according to a presentation of academic calendar options emailed to *The Tech* by Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz. The delayed start date would be Feb. 16 or 17 instead of Feb. 1. IAP will remain remote and run Jan. 4–29.

Waitz wrote that changes to the start date will be based on options that best balance "public health risk," where there is more concern during the cold months, "against disrupting summer plans" if "we go later than normal."

Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation Head G. Anthony Grant wrote in an email to varsity athletes Oct. 14 that "while the specific dates have not been formally adopted by the Institute at this time, we can anticipate a significant change to our normal spring schedule" that will "reflect a later start to the semester."

The presentation describes five alternatives to the current published calendar, each containing the two-week shift. In all alternatives, a week-long spring break is either removed or replaced with shorter breaks dispersed throughout the term over concerns about COVID-19 transmission. "We anticipate that MIT would not be al-

Spring Semester, Page 2

NATHAN LIANG—THE TECH

New Vassar remains under construction but is scheduled to open January 2021.

Get Out the Vote festival encourages students to vote

Festival had goal of mobilizing Boston-area college students and 'communities of color' to vote

By Kerri Lu and Wenbo Wu
NEWS EDITORS

MIT student groups held the inaugural Get Out the Vote festival (GOTV Fest) Oct. 11 to mobilize Boston-area college students to vote in the upcoming general election and "create momentum in our communities of color to vote," according to the Undergraduate Association's (UA) website. All speakers and performers at the event were people of color. The event had about 1000 attendees.

The festival was organized by the UA, MITVote, Asian American Initiative (AAI), Latino Cultural Center (LCC), American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), and Chinese Students Club (CSC), with support from the South Asian Association of Students and Black Students' Union.

MITVote hosted a Zoom room throughout the festival to help attendees with voter registration or general voting questions.

"Communities of color are often underrepresented at the polls, due to a variety of reasons including language barriers or systemic voter suppression. This is an event of education, solidarity and celebration," the UA website writes. "With the upcoming election, the student vote matters more than ever, especially given the situation with the polls this year."

Performers at the event included Yo-Yo Ma, Duckwrth, Joyce Wrice, Bren Joy, Brandon Banks, Raye Zaragoza, HOAX, Mariela Shaker, the Couchsleepers, Solstice Fayemz, and Lil Seyi. MIT's Asian Dance Team, Bhangra, Mirchi, and Casino Rueda dance groups also contributed performances.

President L. Rafael Reif spoke at the event. GOTV also hosted a Q&A session with California Secretary of State Alex Padilla '94, and Mayor of Cambridge Sumbul Siddiqui.

Reif urged students to value "the importance of voting and civic engagement, especially for people whose voices society has not listened to well," including "not only communities of color but young people in general." Voting is "one of our most essential rights as Americans — the right to have a voice in our government."

"As an immigrant and a naturalized U.S. citizen, I have always treasured the act of voting because I know that the essential rights and structures and institutions of our society… are fragile. They can disappear, and they require our protection," Reif said. "If you treasure living in a democracy, please make sure you support it. Please make sure you vote…This election, and every election, make your voice heard."

Reif also encouraged students to "find ways to engage in your local communities and government at every level" throughout their careers. "Bring what you're learning, at MIT and elsewhere, and help your neighbor, your city, your state, and your nation to make wise choices for the good of all."

Get Out The Vote, Page 3

IN SHORT

Flu vaccines are available at MIT Medical flu clinic in the Johnson Athletic Center from 8 a.m.–4 p.m for all Covid Pass participants and enrolled students until Friday.

The **first day of classes for half-term subjects** offered in the second half of the term is Monday.

Second quarter physical education classes start Monday.

To register for Spring classes, all MIT students must **submit proof of receiving a flu shot** by Oct. 30.

Nominations for recent MIT graduates to the MIT Corporation are open until Oct. 30.

The deadline to nominate faculty members for the **2020 School of Science Teaching Prizes** is Oct. 30.

Interested in **joining *The Tech*?** Email *join@tech.mit.edu.*

Send news and tips to *news@tech.mit.edu.*

MIT celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day after renaming Columbus Day

Indigenous community member campus space options identified

By Mauricio Barba Da Costa

MIT celebrated its first Indigenous Peoples' Day Oct. 12. President L. Rafael Reif announced the renaming of Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day in an email to students Sept. 25, writing that the change came about as a result of conversations among students, staff, and faculty at MIT.

Reif added that he "asked Institute Community and Equity Officer John Dozier and Vice President for Human Resources Ramona Allen to reexamine the roster of Institute holidays."

Reif wrote that MIT has "identified options" for a campus space "for members of our Indigenous community to gather and share traditions and experiences." Additionally, history professor Craig Wilder will teach a class on researching MIT's Native American history in the spring. These changes occur alongside MIT's Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which will be formally launched in March 2021.

MIT's virtual Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration included a

Indigenous, Page 2

All MIT students in U.S. required to take flu shot by Oct. 30

Students who do not submit proof of having received a flu vaccine cannot register for classes in second semester

By Daisy Wang
STAFF REPORTER

All students currently in the U.S. must receive a flu shot and inform MIT by Oct. 30, including students living off campus, MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis '90 wrote in an email to students Sept. 25.

Failure to provide proof of vaccination "will prevent you from registering for second semester classes," Stuopis wrote in an email to *The Tech*.

Stuopis wrote that Massachusetts has required flu shots for all college students ages 30 and under. However, the Massachusetts policy writes that college students "who are completely off-campus and engaged in remote learning only" are exempt from the flu shot requirement.

Students seeking exemptions to the flu shot can fill out an online form, although exemptions will only be granted for medical or religious reasons, Stuopis wrote to *The Tech*. If a medical exemption is requested, the student must provide a note from "the patient's personal healthcare provider."

MIT Medical wrote in an email to off-campus students Oct. 7 that students living outside the U.S. "can wait until [they] return to the U.S. to get their shot." However, if possible, MIT Medical still recommends they get their vaccine now where they live.

According to the MIT Medical website, COVID Pass participants, all enrolled students, and patients with a primary care provider at MIT Medical are eligible to get their flu shots at the Johnson Athletic Center. The flu clinic runs from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. daily Sept. 30–Oct. 16.

Patients 65 and over should go to the clinic between 8-–10 a.m., while children 10 and under should go from noon–4 p.m. Face masks are required at all times, and patients should bring their MIT ID or COVID Pass app if they have it.

COVID Pass participants are able to get their flu shots at the clinic during specific assigned times while other MIT Medical patients are able to get their flu shots at

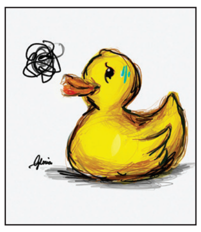
Flu Shot, Page 2

ULTIMIT INVITATIONAL
A smashing success. **ARTS, p. 4**

GET OUT THE VOTE
An empowering mélange of art and civic action. **ARTS, p. 5**

VOTE HERE
ENTER DOOR#
ALD. DIST. 7
WARDS 160,161
City of Milwaukee
We are in this TOGETHER!
GOOD PHYSICAL DISTANCING

VOTER SUPPRESSION
A close look at an evolving struggle. **ARTS, p. 4**



SPLASH CONTEST
Which duck would you rather be? **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8**

SECTIONS
Arts 4
Fun Pages 6
Campus Life 8

The Tech
Established 1881

Publisher
Nathan Liang ’21

Editor in Chief
Kristina Chen ’23

Business Manager
Thomas Wang ’21

Managing Editor
Ivana Alardín ’21

Executive Editor
Áron Ricardo Perez-Lopez ’20

NEWS STAFF

News Editors: Kerri Lu ’23, Wenbo Wu ’23; **Associate News Editors:** Shelley Choi ’23, Grace Song ’23; **Staff:** Rujul Gandhi ’22, Margaret Rodriguez ’22, Edwin Song ’22, Kylee Carden ’23, Richter Jordaan ’23, Cami Mejia ’23, Jennifer Ai ’24, Daisy Wang ’24; **Meteorologist:** Sarah Weidman ’21.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Editors: Joanna Lin ’22, Kevin Pho ’22, Ana P. Reyes Sánchez ’22, Chloe McCreery ’23; **Associate Editor:** Arun Wongprommoon ’23; **Staff:** Yichi Zhang G, Jonah Darnel ’22, Nicole Teichner ’22, Caroline Bao ’23, Arthur Reiner De Belen ’23, Dean Fanggohans ’23, Kimmy McPherson ’23, Ronak Roy ’23, Olivia Schirm ’23, Lydia Patterson ’24, William Xu ’24; **Illustrators:** Gloria Lin ’21, Max Yu ’21, Raphi Kang ’23, Camille Uldry Lavergne ’23.

OPINION STAFF

Editor: Jen Fox ’21.

SCIENCE STAFF

Associate Editors: Isabel Barnet ’22, Anushka Ray ’22; **Staff:** Jocelyn Shen ’22, Seung Hyeon Shim ’23.

SPORTS STAFF

Editors: Ben Kettle ’22, Suleman Thaniana ’23.

ARTS STAFF

Editors: Lior Hirschfeld ’21, Liane Xu ’23, Erika Yang ’23; **Associate Editor:** Lulu Tian ’22; **Staff:** Vyshnavi Vennelakanti G, Johnson Huynh ’21, Max Langenkamp ’21, Lani Lee ’21, Sharon Lin ’21, Nyssa Miller ’21, Rona Wang ’21, Leah Yost ’21, Alana Chandler ’22, Vaishnavi Phadnis ’22, Victoria Dzieciol ’23.

PHOTOGRAPHY STAFF

Editors: Ethan Sit ’21, Kevin Ly ’22; **Associate Editors:** Maxwell Yun ’21, Assel Ismoldayeva ’22; **Staff:** Mahi Shafiullah G, Leon Yim ’20, Ether Bezugla ’22, Sophia Fang ’22, Shinjini Ghosh ’22, Alex Li ’22, Kevin S. Chen ’23, Maximo Machado ’23.

COPY STAFF

Copy Chief: Jack Dinsmore ’22; **Associate Copy Chiefs:** Kendall Yu ’21, Laura Schmidt-Hong ’23; **Staff:** Yaseen Alkhafaji ’21, Talia Blum ’21, Ayomikun Ayodeji ’22, Pranit Nanda ’22, Clinton Reid ’22, Sophia Zhi ’22, Stuti Khandwala ’23, Michael V. Bhopaul ’24, Caitlin Fukumoto ’24, Joseph Li ’24, Alicia Yang ’24, Sarah Zhao ’24.

BUSINESS STAFF

Advertising Managers: Steven Ngo ’22, Daniel Zhang ’22; **Staff:** Asia Hypsher ’21, Tafsia Shikdar ’21, Leon Yu ’21, Alvin Zhu ’21, Pranit Nanda ’22, Amber Liu ’23.

TECHNOLOGY STAFF

Director: Tareq El Dandachi ’22.

ADVISORY BOARD

Paul E. Schindler, Jr. ’74, Barry S. Surman ’84, Deborah A. Levinson ’91, Karen Kaplan ’93, Saul Blumenthal ’98, Frank Dabek ’00, Satwiksai Seshasai ’01, Daniel Ryan Bersak ’02, Eric J. Cholankeril ’02, Nathan Collins SM ’03, Tiffany Dohzen ’06, Beckett W. Sterner ’06, Marissa Vogt ’06, Andrew T. Lukmann ’07, Zachary Ozer ’07, Austin Chu ’08, Michael McGraw-Herdeg ’08, Marie Y. Thibault ’08, Ricardo Ramirez ’09, Nick Semenkovich ’09, Angeline Wang ’09, Quentin Smith ’10, Jeff Guo ’11, Joseph Maurer ’12, Ethan A. Solomon ’12, Connor Kirschbaum ’13, Jessica J. Pourian ’13, Aislyn Schalck ’13, Anne Cai ’14, Jessica L. Wass ’14, Bruno Faviero ’15, Kali Xu ’15, Leon Lin ’16, Kath Xu ’16, Anthony Yu ’16, Colleen Madlinger ’17, Lenny Martinez Dominguez ’17, Charlie J. Moore ’17, William Navarre ’17, Katherine Nazemi ’17, Emma Bingham ’19, Vivian Zhong ’19, Josephine Yu ’20, B. D. Colen.

EDITORS AT LARGE

Senior Editors: Nafisa Syed G, Adira Balzac ’21, Jessica Shi ’21.

PRODUCTION STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Editors: Joanna Lin ’22, Chloe McCreery ’23; **Staff:** Lydia Patterson ’24, William Xu ’24; **Copy Editors:** Jack Dinsmore ’22, Laura Schmidt-Hong ’23, Caitlin Fukumoto ’24, Michael Bhopaul ’24

The Tech (ISSN 0148-9607) is published on Thursdays during the academic year (except during MIT vacations) and monthly during the summer by The Tech, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Subscriptions are $50.00 per year (third class). **POSTMASTER:** Please send all address changes to our mailing address: The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029. **TELEPHONE:** Editorial: (617) 253-1541. Business: (617) 258-8324. Facsimile: (617) 258-8226. *Advertising, subscription, and typesetting rates available.* Entire contents © ***2020 The Tech***. *Printed by Graphic Developments, Inc.*

WEATHER

Crumpled leaves and windy skies

By Shinjini Ghosh and Phoebe Lin

After a nice fall break swathed in the fall colors, and interspersed spells of rain, it’s pretty to look out over the Charles river and see the red and orange hues. The trees are fast losing leaves and the winds are getting chilly. Maybe take a walk outside before the trees go all bare? Watch out for the colder weekend though!

Meanwhile, it is 90°F in California, and it has been six months since it has rained. Phoenix, Arizona has reached its 143th day in the year over 100°F. Cooler conditions are expected from every other part of the US, excluding California. There is a possibility of snow in the north and lots of rain in the south, perfect for some spooky evenings.

Extended Forecast

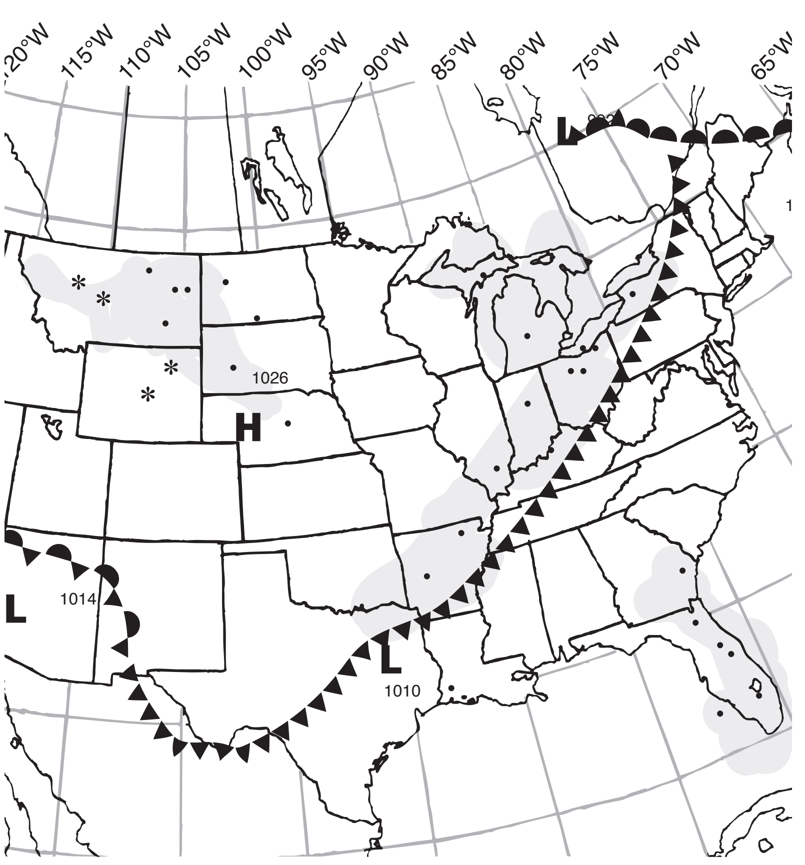
Today: Mostly sunny and then breezy, high near 75°F (24°C). South wind 8-13 mph, increasing to 15-20 mph in the afternoon, possibly up to 31 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, low around 58°F (14°C). South winds 10-17 mph.

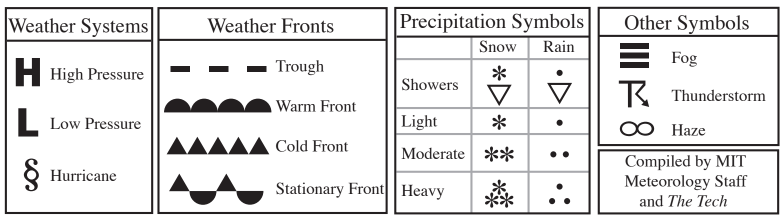
Tomorrow: Chance of showers in the morning before 9 AM and rain after 11 AM. Mostly cloudy, high of 67°F (19°C) and low of 50°F (10°C). Southwest winds 6-8 mph, then turning north.

Saturday: Rain in the morning, high of 55°F (13°C), low of 43°F (6°C). High chance of precipitation, with wind gusts.

Sunday: Sunny. High around 60°F (16°C) and low around 48°F (9°C). West winds 7-10 mph, turning south in the afternoon.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, October 15, 2020



Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and *The Tech*

Barnhart: MIT still plans to invite three classes for spring

Spring Semester, from Page 1

lowing travel mid-semester,” as “it would require another quarantine period on return,” Waitz wrote.

Additional changes include implementing remote instruction during the first two weeks of the semester to reduce building density during the colder periods. The calendar options contain other variations such as hosting a registration week instead of a registration day, reducing the number of teaching days, and shortening the final exam period.

During registration week, advisors would be able to meet with advisees any time during the second week of February. The option would allow for one additional day to the semester, Waitz wrote. The minimum number of teaching days considered is 63, slightly less than the 65 days in the current calendar.

Administrators also considered shortening the final exam period from four days to three because they saw one-third fewer finals than usual during Spring 2020 after APART recommended faculty to shift away from “higher stakes assessment mechanisms,” Waitz wrote. However, the shift was “not as significant” in the fall. “The uncertainty around this is one of the reasons our latest permutations preserve four final exam days.”

The presentation estimates that shortening the final exam period would create “85 additional direct exam conflicts and 288 additional back-to-back exams.”

Waitz wrote that no specific announcement day for the spring calendar has been decided. However, MIT is hoping to make a decision “as quickly as possible” on both the start date and which students will be allowed on campus “while providing opportunities for community input.” Groups such as the Graduate Student Council and Undergraduate Association have recently met with Waitz to discuss the options.

Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD ’88 said in an interview with *The Tech* that MIT still plans to invite all first years, sophomores, and juniors to campus in the spring, as announced in July. “Our approach…has been to take that plan and to say, ‘How do we make that plan happen in a way that is safe?,’” Barnhart said.

Wilder: MIT ‘sits on Native American lands and waters’

Indigenous, from Page 1

sunrise ceremony, musical performances, a fireside chat, and a series of presentations by members of the Indigenous community on campus. Dozier wrote in an email to The Tech that the celebration also included a virtual luncheon with MLK Visiting Scholar Patricia Saulis and a conversation with Tommy Orange, author of the national bestseller, *There There*.

Luke Bastian ’21, president of the MIT chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), said in an interview with *The Tech* that as many as 65 students attended the event at one time.

The recent changes were spearheaded by AISES and the Native American Student Association (NASA). Bastian and NASA President Alvin Harvey G said in an interview with *The Tech* that NASA and AISES have been advocating for the change of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day and the space on campus for Indigenous students for years.

“My sophomore fall is when we started being like, why are we celebrating Columbus?” Bastian said, adding that the Cambridge City Council voted to make the name change in 2016. “Why are we celebrating someone who is known to commit genocide and commit truly atrocious things?… Columbus Day was never celebrated in Phoenix, or at least I never got the day off for school.” However, “there had been some staff pushback from Italian Americans which is the main reason change didn’t go through” at MIT before this year.

Harvey said that the location of the space for Indigenous students on campus is still uncertain. “I’m carrying a lot of experiences that were shared to me by alumni who graduated last year and who graduated 20, 30 years ago and they’ve been asking for the same thing and they’ve been made the same promises or just outright denied. When [administrators] make the promise, it’s usually just a temporary space, or you’ll have to share it, or we’ll have to put you somewhere that’s not nice like the bottom of Walker Memorial.”

Saulis said in an interview with *The Tech* that the Institute is sitting upon the Wampanoag nation’s land. She called the recent changes “a first step of many” to adequately honor Indigenous students on campus and reconcile not only with the Wampanoag nation but with all 82 tribes impacted by MIT’s history as a land-grant university.

Professor Wilder wrote in an email to *The Tech* that his class will address how MIT has historically benefited at the expense of the Indigenous community: “The Institute sits on Native American lands and waters. Its status as a land-grant institution means that it also benefited financially from the seizure and sale of Native lands in the West.”

Wilder wrote that NASA and AISES have worked toward the name change “for a long time,” and that he hopes “Indigenous Peoples’ Day will become a moment for campus-wide reflection and engagement that defines the fall term.” Wilder is the current faculty advisor to NASA and has previously served as faculty advisor to AISES.

Students allergic to eggs should obtain FluBlok vaccine

Flu Shot, from Page 1

any time within the three-week window.

Students living off campus not enrolled in Covid Pass are strongly encouraged to get their flu vaccine at a “convenient” location “such as your local clinician or a retail pharmacy like CVS or Walgreens,” MIT Medical wrote in the Oct. 7 email. Afterward, students must send proof of vaccination using an online form, which could be a doctor’s note or a form from the flu shot location. Students who live close to campus may get their flu shot at the Johnson Athletic Center.

The MIT Medical Flu FAQ writes that individuals with egg allergies should not get their vaccine at MIT Medical’s walk-in clinics. “FluBlok is a flu vaccine that is produced without chicken eggs,” which MIT Medical offers “by appointment for MIT Medical patients only.” If an individual has had an allergic reaction to eggs in the past, “hives, for example,” they should speak to a primary care provider before receiving a flu shot, the FAQs state.

Public health officials are “concerned that having the flu makes someone more susceptible to complications from COVID-19,” Stuopis wrote to *The Tech*, adding that “it’s incredibly important to do whatever we can to avoid having a bad flu season atop the pandemic.” Vaccines “prevent or lessen the effects of influenza” and are “vital” to keeping everyone healthy, Stuopis wrote.

Stuopis wrote to *The Tech* that a lighter flu season because “everyone is wearing masks, physically distancing, and being extra careful to avoid getting sick… doesn’t preclude the need for flu shots. One does not replace the other. We need both improved health behaviors and vaccines to stay safe this flu season.”

Patel: Many 'feel like their vote doesn't matter,' but these beliefs 'aren't true'

Get Out The Vote, from Page 1

Padilla said that individuals who don't vote "do not have a say in who it is that's making these critical decisions on your behalf" on issues such as climate change, access to healthcare, technological innovation, gun safety, and affordability of higher education. "The way we can make our voice heard in the political process is through our votes."

Padilla said that California's government mailed all voters a ballot and expanded the in-person voting window to improve voter access in the 2020 general election. Additionally, he said that online and automatic voter registration have resulted in an increased number of registered voters in California in recent years.

Padilla said that he became involved with California government shortly after graduating from MIT because he felt strongly about issues affecting immigrants, such as California's 1994 Proposition 187 prohibiting undocumented immigrants from using public services. He said that his engineering education at MIT taught him problem-solving skills useful to his career in government and that "an MIT education is such a solid foundation for critical thinking and problem solving that it applies across the board."

Siddiqui said that Cambridge City Council "reflects the diversity of thought we see throughout the city because people use their votes as an extension of their voice." She said that voting allows individuals to "have a say in the policies and the world you hope to see," adding that "the right to vote has been so hard-fought," especially in the context of current and historical voter suppression in the U.S.

Siddiqui said that the Cambridge government encouraged voting by mail and relocated several of its polling sites to facilities with lower risk for COVID-19 to improve voter access and safety. She said that Cambridge has also held socially distanced voter education events and distributed educational materials to promote voter participation.

Representatives from Asian Pacific Islander American Vote and North American Indian Center of Boston also presented at the festival to encourage students of color to vote.

Short videos of about 20 MIT students discussing why they choose to vote were played at the event.

The GOTV organizing team consisted of AISES President Luke Bastian '21, UA Vice President Yu Jing Chen '22, AAI executive board member Alana Chandler '22, CSC executive board member Savannah En '21, LCC President Uriel Magana Salgado '21, UA representative Mallika Pajjuri '23, and MITVote representative Nikasha Patel '22.

The Tech held an interview with Chandler, Chen, and Patel after the event.

Chen said that the event was "really special" in "how many student groups came together for this," citing how the event "started in AAI as just an idea." GOTV Fest was conceived as a "four-day" event, "each day highlighting a different community of color," though it eventually took shape to become the event Sunday.

"This is the first time any of us had ever organized anything like this," Chen said, adding that it was "only a week and a half before the event" that the team received "any confirmation" of attendance from many guest speakers or performing artists.

Additionally, Chen said that organizing the event was "very grassroots." The organizing team had to "craft a budget and find a way to fund the event from the ground up, ultimately proposing" for the event to gain funding from the Office of Experiential Learning. The team also "had to stretch [its] creative muscles" to publicize the event, Chen said.

Chandler said that some artists only confirmed their appearance Oct. 7, so the team was "finalizing the schedule on the Friday before the event." The team "wanted to include… big-name people" whenever possible, so "working with their busy schedules" was also challenging. Chandler added that being able to get the wide geographic array of artists and speakers at the event was "really unique" to the event being virtual.

Chen said that because the team had never organized such an event before, they were also unsure about how much to pay artists. The original budget request "was definitely undercutting it" and had to be rewritten, Chen said.

Patel said that it was "a little nerve-racking" to not know "until the night before" or "day of" if the video files artists sent in would be what the team had expected. The team was "lucky" to have worked with "really professional artists" so everything "just kind of came together," Patel said.

Many of the performers, including Brandon Banks and HOAX, had their segments done live during the event, Chandler said. Other artists contributed pre-recorded performances.

"There are a lot of people who feel like their vote doesn't matter" due to the state, county, or precinct they live in, Patel said, but she hopes the festival showed in an "exciting way" that these beliefs "aren't true."

Chen said that she hopes that the event will show community members how "one person can really make a difference" by creating "waves within their own communities and inspire the vote there."

Chandler added that in addition to promoting voting, she hopes that the event "made people happy," especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. "We wanted [GOTV Fest] to be really fun" to "hopefully" take people's "headspace out of their house… and back to the MIT community in a non-academic way."

Editor's note: Alana Chandler is an arts writer at The Tech.

Simmons pod program placed on hiatus for a week after two incidents involving students of separate pods 'intermingling'

Multiple testing cycles would be necessary 'to be confident that unsanctioned gatherings' did not pose risk

By Kylee Carden
Staff Reporter

Simmons Hall paused its residential pod program Oct. 6–13 after "two separate incidents involving the expansion and intermingling of separate Simmons pods," the Simmons House Team and Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson wrote in an email to Simmons residents.

The pod program allows groups of up to six students to interact with each other without face coverings or physical distancing in students' dorm rooms, assigned pod lounges, and other designated spaces. Members of separate pods intermingling violated the agreement signed by pod members, which states that students must "exercise strict social distancing with those outside their pod."

The Simmons House Team wrote in a follow-up email to residents Oct. 10 that they were also made aware that Simmons residents from multiple pods made plans "to travel and meet off campus" over the weekend, violating the pod program pause.

They wrote that "the decision to pause the Simmons pod program was based squarely on public health concerns and not meant as a punishment." Multiple testing cycles would be necessary "to be confident that unsanctioned gatherings among students from different pods did not pose a risk to the Simmons community."

Simmons Head of House Ellen Essigmann PhD '80 wrote in an email to Simmons residents Oct. 11 that the Simmons House Team and Division of Student Life "do not support the request for a pod trip off campus this weekend" and that if the trip happens, "disciplinary follow-up may occur."

Simmons Head of House John Essigmann PhD '76 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that "it is very important for students to come forward" and report violations of MIT policy "when their health, the health of their neighbors and the ability of MIT to pursue its mission can be affected."

He wrote that the Simmons House Team "reminded students of the agreement they signed at the outset of the semester in order to form and participate in a pod" and "enhanced the presence of our Compliance Resource Staff in the dorm" after the pod violation.

In the past week, MIT has reported four positive tests on the Institute's COVID-19 testing dashboard.

Since MIT's testing ramp-up late August, the Institute has had on average approximately seven positive COVID-19 tests per week.

Are you a tetris ninja?

Use your powers for good!

...by joining the production department at The Tech!

join@tech.mit.edu

opn
arts
spo
life
pand
fun

Solution to NBA

from page 6

1	4	5	2	7	8	6	9	3
6	8	3	4	9	1	2	7	5
9	2	7	6	3	5	8	1	4
5	6	4	1	2	9	7	3	8
3	7	2	8	5	6	9	4	1
8	1	9	7	4	3	5	2	6
7	5	6	9	1	4	3	8	2
4	9	8	3	6	2	1	5	7
2	3	1	5	8	7	4	6	9

Solution to Vote

from page 6

2	5	1	4	6	3
3	6	2	5	1	4
1	4	6	3	5	2
4	1	3	6	2	5
6	3	5	2	4	1
5	2	4	1	3	6

Solution to On Wheels

from page 6

B	A	T	O	N	■	A	B	B	A	■	F	A	T	S
E	R	A	S	E	■	C	L	A	D	■	A	B	E	T
S	I	L	L	S	■	T	O	L	D	■	M	A	X	I
T	A	C	O	T	R	U	C	K	S	■	I	T	A	L
■	■	■	■	L	O	P	■	■	T	A	L	E	N	T
S	H	A	M	E	S	■	G	O	O	F	Y	■	■	■
P	O	L	O	■	A	S	A	N	■	A	C	R	I	D
A	B	O	V	E	■	T	R	I	■	R	A	I	S	E
N	O	T	I	P	■	A	T	N	O	■	R	O	L	L
■	■	■	N	E	I	G	H	■	P	A	S	T	E	L
R	A	G	G	E	D	■	■	R	A	M	■	■	■	■
E	L	E	V	■	T	R	A	I	L	B	I	K	E	S
P	I	T	A	■	A	I	R	S	■	U	N	I	T	E
A	K	I	N	■	G	L	E	E	■	S	T	A	T	E
Y	E	N	S	■	S	E	A	R	■	H	O	S	E	S

Solution to Indigenous

from page 7

9	6	2	1	8	7	5	4	3
1	8	5	2	3	4	9	6	7
3	4	7	5	6	9	2	1	8
8	3	4	6	1	2	7	9	5
5	1	9	4	7	3	8	2	6
2	7	6	8	9	5	1	3	4
6	9	8	7	4	1	3	5	2
7	5	1	3	2	6	4	8	9
4	2	3	9	5	8	6	7	1

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!
Take This.
photo@tech.mit.edu

VIDEO GAMES

Crossovers on crossovers

The one where Red Bull Gaming brings a world-class Smash player to MIT

Super Smash Brothers Tournament

Hosted by Smash UltiMIT Club, Red Bull Gaming

Featuring Plup

Streamed on Twitch

By Grace Song

With the long history of Super Smash Bros. bringing together beloved characters since ’99 and the record-breaking sales of its Ultimate installment for the Switch, the series has likely made its way into the pastimes of many. For some of the most enthusiastic players at MIT, one can turn to the Smash UltiMIT Club, whose mission statement includes “[promoting] the development of a Super Smash Bros. community at MIT” as well as facilitating interactions with the larger Smash Bros. and Esports space.

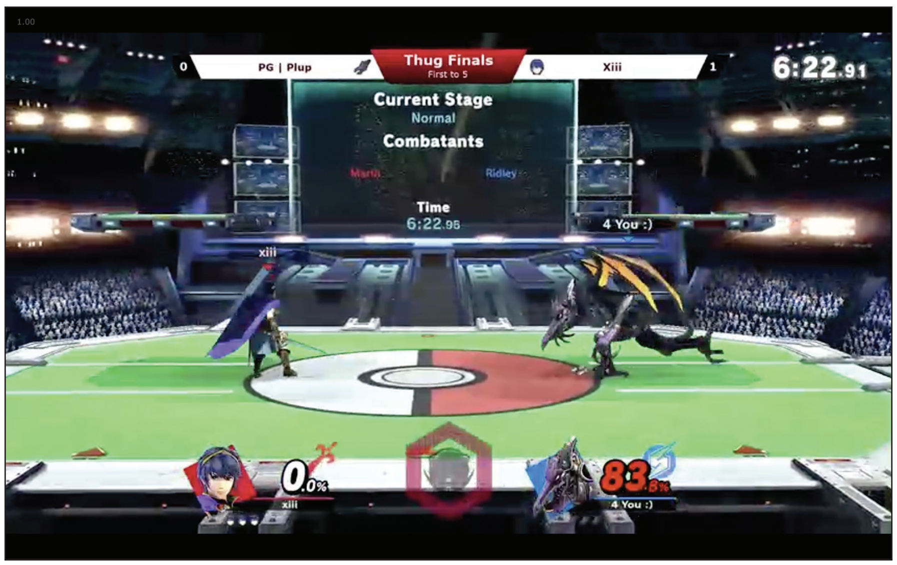
In a highly anticipated crossover episode, UltiMIT hosted a Smash Ultimate tournament with a special appearance from Justin McGrath (tag Plup), a full-time and globally ranked player in Smash with impressive stats which you can find throughout the web.

The event was coordinated by Jordan Tappa ’21. Along with reaching out to Plup through MIT alumni who are Red Bull Gaming representatives, Tappa (tag Jolt) founded and currently leads the UltiMIT club. Thanks to Red Bull, which has sponsored 500 athletes including Plup, each of the eight UltiMIT players also received a four-pack of their energy drinks. And the prize for the winner of the event? A signed jersey from none other than Plup himself.

Over 200 viewers attended the livestream on Twitch, the evening of Oct. 3. The tournament consisted of an 8-player invitational commentated by Plup and a Boss Battle where each of the UltiMIT players faced off Plup in a friendly best-of-one game (spoiler: Plup swept with a victory for all eight games).

The 8-player double elimination bracket culminated in top three finishers Eric Hong ‘21 (tag xiii) playing Marth, Tappa (tag Jolt) playing Yellow Yoshi, and Jonathan Edelman ‘24 (tag Troia) playing Hero.

In between commentating for the matches, Plup joined the UltiMIT players in Discord to hang out and participate in a Q&A. Despite the intense and competitive nature of Smash, Plup was remarkably relaxed and friendly during the discussion, which bounced between a plethora of topics: his tournament preparation strategy (nothing specific besides keepin’ it clean); playing full-time (a natural transition after getting sponsored by Panda Global); how he deals with the pressures of being a pro (“don’t know of any,” especially because he’s “low-key on social media”); and various aspects of the game’s offering of characters, including wishes for upcoming additions (Amaterasu!) as well as thoughts on the potential incorporation of Steve from Minecraft (just out of place in many ways).



GRACE SONG — THE TECH

Invitational winner xiii faces off against Plup in game one of a first-to-five series Oct. 3.

A notable point in the tournament occurred after the eight-member bracket, when first place finisher xiii fought Plup in a first-to-five set. Although the match ultimately finished with 5–1 in favor of Plup, xiii claimed victory in the first game after an impressive comeback. The game then concluded with the Boss Battle, which included the remaining players of the eight: crew succ, dwang, Infernape (who was closest to beating Plup), TheKneesBees, and Dr. Chase.

Overall, the tournament was an awesome opportunity to learn about a community of dedicated individuals and a well-run virtual event during the age of COVID-19. It is also yet another example to add to a growing list of collaborations including MIT students which I am continually fascinated and excited by (I’m lookin’ at you, Yo-Yo Ma @ Get Out the Vote festival).

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

All In is an appeal to fundamental American rights

Timely documentary empowers young people to vote in 2020

By Cindy Xie

As the days tick down to Nov. 3, politicians, activists, and Americans nationwide glue anxious eyes to the final stretch of what may be the most unprecedented election cycle in recent history. Amidst the protests and pandemic that have come to define 2020, figures from former presidents to Hollywood influencers emerge with a unifying message urging their followers to vote.

All In: The Fight For Democracy adds valuable insight to this conversation. It details a long and winding narrative of voter suppression in the United States, weaving together historical perspectives and present-day stories to shed light on voting’s deceptively complicated past. Following the documentary’s late September release, directors Lisa Cortez and Liz Garbus hosted college students for a roundtable to discuss the topics in their film.

One of the documentary’s central figures is Stacey Abrams, who gained national recognition as the Democratic candidate for Georgia’s governor seat in 2018 and whose name made the short list of Joe Biden’s possible running mates earlier this year. Interviews about her journey into politics and the controversy of voter suppression in her own tightly contested 2018 race appear throughout the documentary. Cortez views Abrams’ story as a “spine that would then allow us to explore the historical precedents.”

As *All In* launches into this history, the recurring relationship between voting rights and racism in America quickly reveals itself. Throughout the history of voting laws, from the Reconstruction Era to the 1960s civil rights movement and current events, discrimination rears its ever-shifting head. The film shows how as laws cut down one form of voting discrimination against people of color, another rises to take its place. Policies that initially appear benign, like literacy tests or the redrawing of districts in gerrymandering, often disguise more malicious intentions.

In covering these issues, the film invokes sources such as archives, interviews, and historians. Cortez says that while researching for the documentary, the team wasn’t “surprised but… always amazed at the reconfiguration of the tactics.” The historical precedents reaffirmed Cortez and Garbus’ concerns about voter suppression in the present day — the issue that originally compelled them to create the documentary.

Design elements also played into the film’s final presentation. “We’re always looking for new and exciting ways to tell stories… especially when there is not existing source and archival material,” Garbus explains. For *All In*, this desire manifests itself in drawings designed by Diana Ejaita and adapted into animations for the film. The drawings overlie Abrams’ voice as she recounts the racial discrimination she experienced in her youth at her own state governor’s mansion. Garbus says that the drawings were intended to help readers “[focus] on the psychology of the experience more so than just the story beats of what happened.”

In both the documentary and the roundtable, the directors make one message clear: No matter who you are, get out and vote. Their message targets younger generations in particular. Garbus says that “young people in America could… be the most influential voting block if they showed up at the polls and exercised that right.” *All In* shows that others share Garbus’ sentiment, highlighting local community organizers and their varied efforts to raise voter turnout among young people and racial minorities.

This message comes at a crucial moment. For many Generation Z members just coming of age, the 2020 election will mark the first time they are eligible to vote. According to a Pew Research Center article, Gen Z will make up a larger portion of the electorate this year than ever before, at roughly one in every ten eligible voters. But voter turnout among young people remains low, especially when compared to older generations. Although several reasons may contribute, *All In* highlights two key ones: the disillusionment of many young people with politicians and their broader distrust of their government.

★★★★☆

All In: The Fight For Democracy

Directed by Liz Garbus and Lisa Cortez

Screenplay by Jack Youngelson

Starring (as self) Stacey Abrams, Ari Berman, David Pepper, Carol Andersen

Streaming on Amazon

To explain the untapped power of young voters, Garbus turns to Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s (AOC) upset victory in her 2018 race. In Garbus’ eyes, greater diversity and representation in government is the antidote to political apathy, which then boosts voter turnout and creates a positive cycle. She refers back to AOC, explaining how when young people were given a candidate they felt excited about, they “showed up in droves” to vote. Garbus says, “I think our government should be more reflective of our population in terms of age, in terms of race, in terms of gender, and when young folks show up, they have the power to make that so.”

Given the impending election, *All In* is certainly worth the two-hour watch. It provides background on issues relevant to anyone eligible to vote, especially college students who may be first-time voters. What’s more, the film re-energizes a hope and desire for social change that can sometimes get lost in our tumultuous world. Garbus remarks, “there is a lot of energy around politics and culture right now [among young people]… that makes me feel very optimistic.” Garbus and Cortez say one of the best ways to channel this energy is to speak through our ballots.

So to fellow MIT students or anyone reading: Watch this film, and then get out and vote.

For more information about the film and voting resources, visit www.allinforvoting.com.

VOTE HERE
ENTER DOOR#
ALD. DIST. 7
WARDS 160,161
City of Milwaukee
We are in this TOGETHER!
PLEASE PRACTICE
GOOD PHYSICAL DISTANCING
6+ feet

COURTESY OF AMAZON STUDIOS

***All In: The Fight for Democracy* illustrates the myriad forms of voter suppression** throughout American history and highlights the importance of voting for our democracy.

CONCERT REVIEW

Vocals in concert with voting in the countdown to Election Day

This student-led lineup of performing arts and civic action will serenade you to the polls

Get Out the Vote Virtual Festival

Featuring Yo-Yo Ma, Joyce Wrice, Duckwrth, California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, President L. Rafael Reif, and more

October 11

By Disha Trivedi

Sweeping and soothing, the Get Out the Vote Virtual Festival featured a talented coalition of artists and speakers who leveraged art "in concert" with civic action.

The event balanced its mission of voter turnout with aims like passing the mic to performers of color and savoring live artistic engagement. Though the interviews sometimes struggled to balance art and civic action, the overall festival was an ambitious array of artistic diversity under the aegis of increasing youth voter turnout.

With knockout musical performances from household names like cellist Yo-Yo Ma and emerging artists like Solstice Fayemz, the festival was a much-needed dose of live performing arts in the COVID-19 pandemic. Viewers ate it up. Attendees flooded the Zoom chat with positive commentary and posed detailed questions for interviews. One attendee dubbed the festival as the "best virtual event since quarantine started."

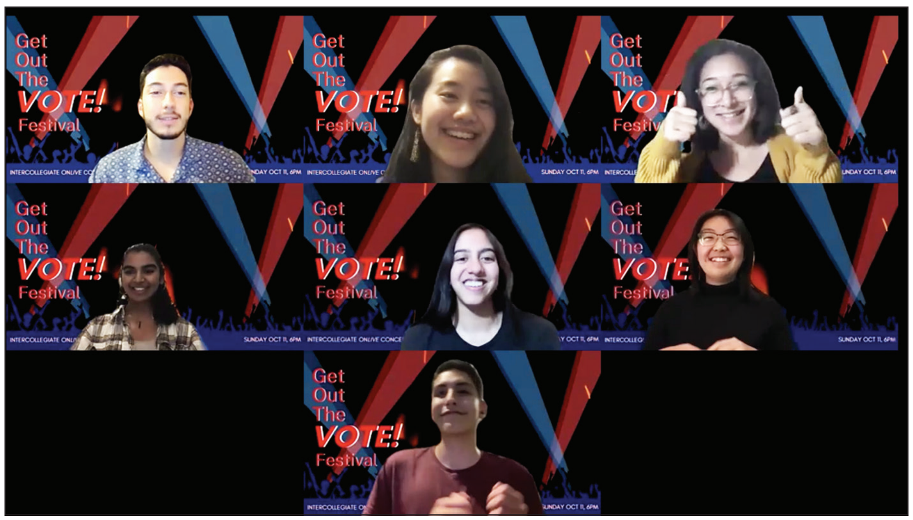
The event's ensemble format was engaging. Performers, public officials, and organizers conveyed a hopeful message of the power of youth voices and urged students to translate their voice into their votes.This broad coalition evoked the wide array of speakers at the Democratic National Convention. The event's message resembled that of the new anthology *All We Can Save*, which strives to aid readers in maintaining hope and taking action in response to climate change.

The musical talent featured tracks from Bren Joy's genre-defying album *Twenties* and Joyce Wrice's multilingual single "That's On You." The majority of musicians identified as Black, Indigenous, or people of color. From Yo-Yo Ma's acclaimed cello solos to Brandon Banks' genre-defying R&B, these artists demonstrated the creative richness that emerges when artists of color take center stage.

These performers made a convincing case for youth-led civic action. Before her rendition of John Williams' main score for *Schindler's List* (1993), violinist and human rights advocate Mariela Shaker shared her story of seeking U.S. asylum to persuade attendees to protect their democratic rights. Raye Zaragosa spun indie folk melodies that featured an incisive stance on climate change and the contradictions of the American Dream. HOAX's bright riffs quickly reeled us in before they introduced personal stories that urged students to cast their ballots. That transition resembled Sarah Cooper's DNC performance, where she slid from her lip-synced comedy to her own rarely-heard voice to encourage voter turnout.

Though musicians captured audience attention, the interview segments suffered from whiplash between the event's many aims. Interview moderators tried to connect voter participation, artistic development, and MIT student life in their questions. They were met with mixed success. In an interview with California Secretary of State Alex Padilla '94 and Mayor of Cambridge Sumbul Siddiqui, moderators asked Secretary Padilla about ballot security before awkwardly shifting to solicit his advice for MIT students in the COVID-19 pandemic.

An interview with Duckwrth featured an uneasy balance between civic engagement and his artistic process. As avid fans of Duckwrth's music, the moderators posed intriguing questions about his latest album but transitioned choppily to his motivations for voting. In response, Duckwrth indicated that he planned to vote yes on California Proposition 22, a controversial ballot initiative on the status of gig workers. By sharing his political position, his response veered from the event's non-partisan aims.



YU JING CHEN '22

The organizing team of the Get Out the Vote Festival Sunday, which featured a host of talents and speakers.

Despite the challenges of balancing its many goals, the festival evaded some difficulties attached to virtual performing arts. Streamed festivals have their limits. On-screen streams feel distant from the close-up vocals found in local coffeehouses and small compared to splashy affairs like Boston Calling. Yet the festival turned the virtual format into a feature, not a bug.

Though a few speakers forgot that they were muted or performers forgot that they were on camera, these technical twists proved endearing rather than distracting. They remind us that despite the physical distance, we're still tied to each other's ordinary, messy lives.

The virtual format invited us to connect with artists and performers on a closer level. Attendees got an intimate glimpse into Brandon Banks' leafy home studio, Joyce Wrice's sunlit space, and President L. Rafael Reif's family photos. Secretary of State Padilla reached out to California students with a Zoom chat message that encouraged them to vote.

Some artists leveraged Zoom to showcase their sound in colorful ways. Couchsleepers' eye-catching blue-red lighting accented their wistful indie sound and mimicked the effects available on local stages like the House of Blues. Dance groups found a silver lining in Zoom's limitations. MIT Mirchi used Zoom's gallery layout to choreograph gestures toward a center-screen banner that read VOTE.

Solstice Fayemz, the stage name of Anjolaoluwa "Anj" Fayemi '20, modeled how to connect with livestream audiences. From the get-go, Fayemz hyped his viewers to sing and rap key verses with him. He later grooved to a recorded applause track, which playfully ribbed his distance from his audience and earned Zoom claps from attendees afar. He harnessed rapid camera movement to capture his freestyle exploration of his space, which conveyed the kinetic energy that it's easy to imagine him radiating in-person. The audience flooded the Zoom chat with emoji-laden appreciation.

Overall, the festival earned its keep as an immense labor of love. Event organizers exuded a clear bond with each other and represented student groups as diverse as the United States' own communities of color. They formed an impressive lineup of art "in concert" with voting — all in a short and likely stressful time frame. This lineup offered a hopeful message of compassion and community in an unpredictable time.

Those involved in the festival should applaud themselves: Art "in concert" with voting models the blend of optimism and action that we need today.

Organizations behind the GOTV Fest include Undergraduate Association (the UA Committee on Public Affairs), MIT Asian American Initiative, Latino Cultural Center, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Chinese Students Club, and MITVote.

The festival was produced with support from the MIT South Asian Association of Students and MIT Black Students Union.

Tweet the best tweets?
Post the best posts?
Get a million likes on both?

Join Social Media @ The Tech!

join@tech.mit.edu

NBA Finals

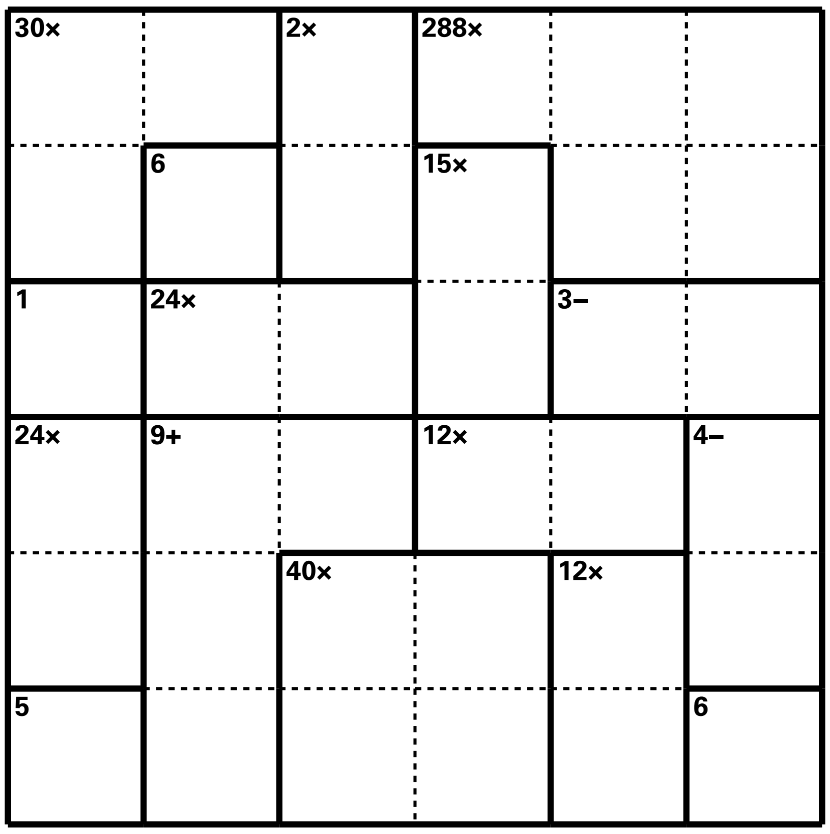
Solution, page 3

	4		2	7			9	3
6		3			1			5
	2						1	
				2			3	
	7		8		6		4	
	1			4				
	5						8	
4			3			1		7
2	3			8	7		6	

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Get Out The Vote

Solution, page 3



30×		2×	288×		
	6		15×		
1	24×			3–	
24×	9+		12×		4–
		40×		12×	
5					6

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

On Wheels

by Stella Zawitowski

Solution, page 3

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14					■	15				■	16			
17					■	18				■	19			
20					21					■	22			
■	■	■	■	23			■	■	24	25				
26	27	28	29			■	30	31				■	■	■
32				■	33	34			■	35		36	37	38
39				40	■	41			■	42				
43					■	44			45	■	46			
■	■	■	47		48			■	49	50				
51	52	53				■	■	54			■	■	■	■
55				■	56	57	58				59	60	61	62
63				■	64				■	65				
66				■	67				■	68				
69				■	70				■	71				

ACROSS

1 Bandleader's stick
6 '70s Swedish superstar singing group
10 "Saturated" things in one's diet
14 Clear a blackboard
15 Dressed (in)
16 Help to commit a crime
17 Window ledges
18 Notified
19 Long skirt
20 Vehicles serving Mexican food
22 Typeface that tilts: Abbr.
23 Chop (off), as tree branches
24 Any special skill
26 Causes to feel guilty
30 Foolish and silly
32 Team sport on horseback
33 Wise __ owl
35 Foul-smelling
39 Higher than
41 Prefix meaning "three"
42 Salary increase
43 "Reward" for poor café service
44 __ extra cost (free)
46 Bagel or bun
47 Sound from a horse
49 Artist's soft-colored crayon
51 Tattered, as cloth
54 Lamb's father
55 Mountain's height: Abbr.
56 Two-wheelers for rough terrain
63 Bread with a pocket
64 Runs on television
65 Join together
66 Similar (to)
67 Great delight
68 Oregon or Ohio
69 Cravings
70 Char on a grill
71 Fire hydrant attachments

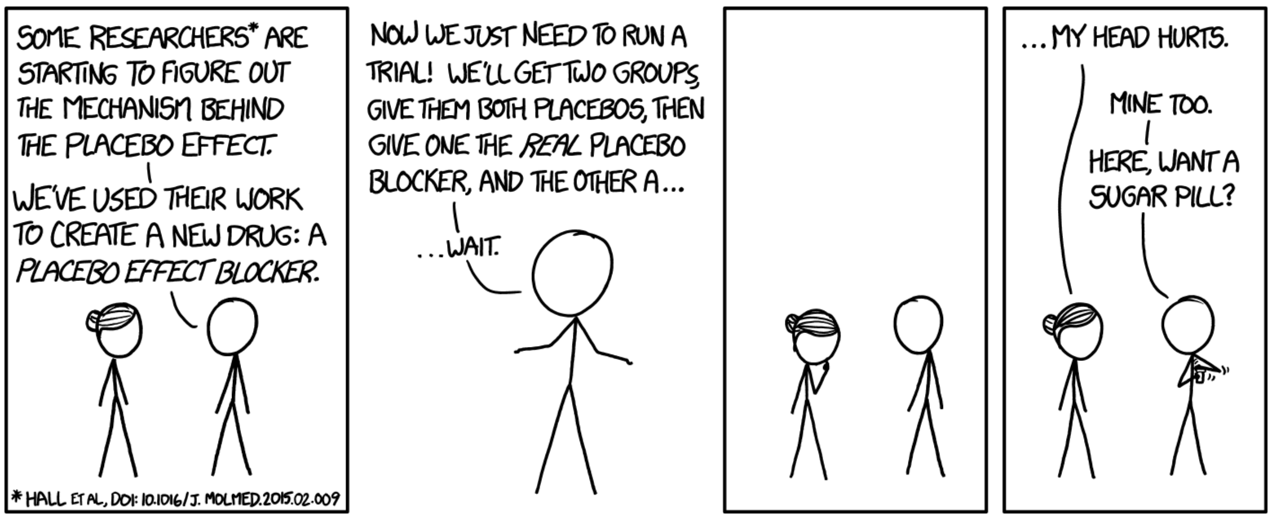
DOWN

1 Second to none
2 Opera solo
3 Skin powder
4 Capital of Norway
5 Snuggle up
6 Misbehave
7 Group that votes the same
8 Refuse to do something
9 Expands upon
10 Vehicles for Mom, Dad and the kids
11 Lessen, as the tide
12 Person from Houston
13 Clown's height extender
21 Civil rights icon Parks
25 Worship from __
26 Reach across, as a bridge
27 Freight train rider
28 Often
29 Vehicles taking furniture to new homes
30 Country singer Brooks
31 From here __ (henceforth)
34 Deer with antlers
36 Very funny person
37 Land surrounded by water
38 "The Farmer in the __" (kids' song)
40 Fencing sword
45 White gemstone
48 Luggage attachments with your name
50 Surprise attack
51 Settle a debt
52 Look __ (resemble each other)
53 Enter, as an auto
54 Early __ (morning person)
57 Make angry
58 Vicinity
59 Take __ account (consider)
60 Autos from South Korea
61 "Small" ending for kitchen
62 Has a look at

A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language

by Randall Munroe

[1526] Placebo Blocker


SOME RESEARCHERS* ARE STARTING TO FIGURE OUT THE MECHANISM BEHIND THE PLACEBO EFFECT.
WE'VE USED THEIR WORK TO CREATE A NEW DRUG: A *PLACEBO EFFECT BLOCKER.*
* HALL ET AL, DOI: 10.1016/J.MOLMED.2015.02.009
NOW WE JUST NEED TO RUN A TRIAL! WE'LL GET TWO GROUPS, GIVE THEM BOTH PLACEBOS, THEN GIVE ONE THE *REAL* PLACEBO BLOCKER, AND THE OTHER A...
...WAIT.
...MY HEAD HURTS.
MINE TOO.
HERE, WANT A SUGAR PILL?

They work even better if you take them with our experimental placebo booster, which I keep in the same bottle.

Indigenous People's Day

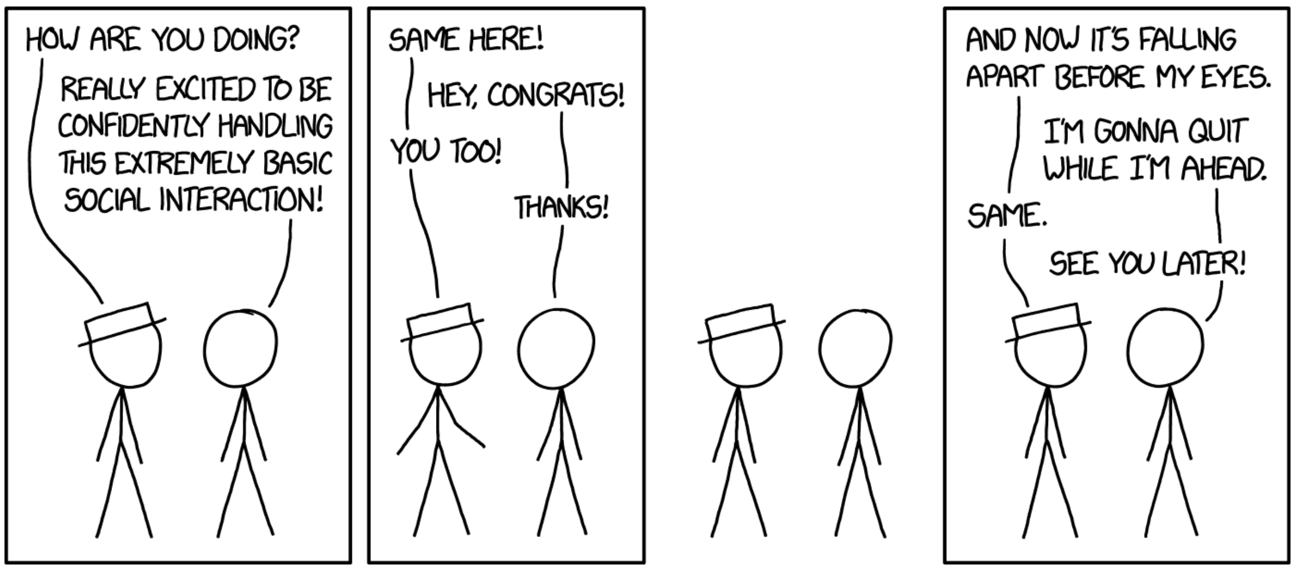
Solution, page 3

9	6				7			
		5	2	3				7
			5		9	2	1	
	3				2	7		5
2		6	8				3	
	9	8	7		1			
7				2	6	4		
			9				7	1

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language
by Randall Munroe

[1961] Interaction


HOW ARE YOU DOING?
REALLY EXCITED TO BE CONFIDENTLY HANDLING THIS EXTREMELY BASIC SOCIAL INTERACTION!
SAME HERE!
HEY, CONGRATS!
YOU TOO!
THANKS!
AND NOW IT'S FALLING APART BEFORE MY EYES.
I'M GONNA QUIT WHILE I'M AHEAD.
SAME.
SEE YOU LATER!

[They do not move.]

ME VS. ME

On floating and drowning ducks

I would not like to be hosed

By Joanna Lin
EDITOR

This week, as MIT Confessions slowly regains its true form — that of wildly hosed students voicing their frustrations — I have also been feeling like I am slogging through piles of work. The sheer amount I stare down is so daunting, it often feels impossible. Now, if I were on campus, I would probably feel the same way, except I would have snacks from Verde's, my friends, and their decidedly better taste in music (did I get called out by not one, not two, but *three* friends who saw Christmas songs on my Spotify log? I decline to comment).

The "floating duck syndrome," coined at Stanford, describes how every student there appears to be graceful and still, while furiously paddling beneath the surface. It's generally an illustration of how toxic it can be when everyone pretends that they are fine. People will work themselves to exhaustion just to look like they are on the same page as everyone else.

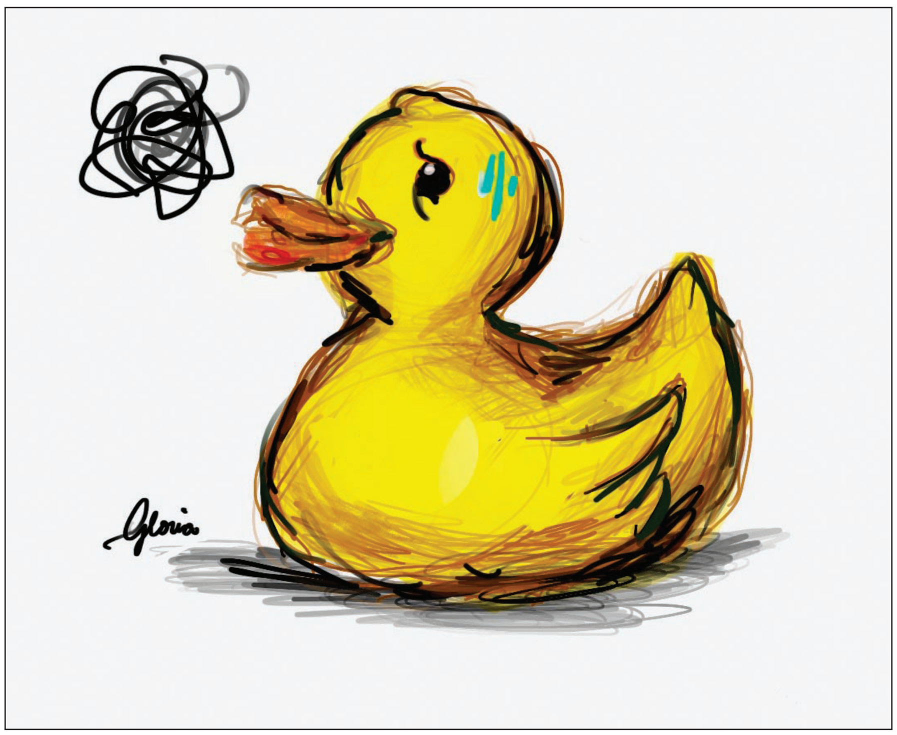
> **People will work themselves to exhaustion just to look like they are on the same page as everyone else.**

This culture is slowly being chipped away, and I, for one, am glad to see it. Being able to admit when you're not equipped to solve a problem and then being able to ask for help is one of the greatest skills, and one that I am still working towards. And from an overall population standpoint, breaking down these walls of superiority can do wonders for everyone's mental health.

At MIT, we pride ourselves on being a supportive community, because attending MIT will chew you up and spit you out. We all recognize that, no matter what course we are or how well our high schools prepared us, these four years are harder than anything we could even imagine. Vocalizing our exhaustion makes each other more human and brings us together. After all, suffering creates bonds; just ask anyone who's psetted in Stud 5 until daybreak.

> **Vocalizing our exhaustion makes us more human and brings us together.**

At the same time, I sometimes wonder if we've gone too far. If we've horseshoe-d this thing. Now, comparing how hosed we are is another competition altogether. The ability to function on five, four, or two hours of sleep, while taking 90 units and being on exec for seven student organizations, is a coveted accomplishment only for the most resolute. In a place where things are hard enough as it is, we shouldn't be showing off how much harder we're making it for ourselves.



GLORIA LIN — THE TECH

The only ducks who can float truly effortlessly are rubber ducks, and the rest of us can only pretend.

Maybe it's because there are so many amazing opportunities at MIT that we would be remiss to let them slip through our fingers. Maybe it's because we all believe in the fallacy that, no matter how hosed we are, we will be able to make it through. Either way, I am calling this new phenomenon "drowning duck syndrome." The contest for the duck who can cross the pond most serenely has become one for the duck with the biggest splashes.

I'm not sure if it's the coronavirus situation, the upcoming election, or that I'm an elderly junior, but I'm exhausted thinking about all the things I used to do. Last year, I would wake up at 5 a.m., contacts still in, lights still on, and in complete panic more often than I'd like to admit. Back in February, at a Ballroom Dance Team post-competition team dinner, I was telling a grad student about the three meetings I still needed to go to (all later than 8 p.m. on a Sunday night), and he just chuckled and said, "I too thought I was invincible as a second-year in undergrad."

I always feel two-faced when I urge others to take care of themselves, to take fewer classes, and to drop extracurriculars, when, in the back of my mind, I still think that I am capable of doing everything. It's not that I don't want them to be competitive *blank* applicants, but I genuinely believe that they would be happier without the stress. Somehow any concern for my own mental and physical health never really existed. And I guess that's how everyone thinks, so we all just plow forward with too much on our plates.

Will there ever be a proper balance between concealing and exposing our struggles? Probably not. Even if it's unconscious, we'll always be trying to one-up each other. However, I think being transparent more easily allows for discussion and change, and I'll always be grateful to have the chance to be at MIT.

WANTED

sports·writ·er(s)
/ˈspôrtsˌrīdərs/
noun
noun: sports writers
journalists who write about sports.

No prior experience needed! Just an interest in sports. And probably writing.

For more information, please contact **sports@the-tech.mit.edu**